

March 26, 1999

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)

Food and Drug Administration 6 9 5 2 '99 MAR 30 P2:10
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, Maryland 20852

Re: Docket #98N-1038, "Irradiation in the Production, Processing, and Handling of Food"

To whom it may concern:

The FDA should retain the current labeling law, the current terminology of "treated with radiation" or "treated by irradiation," and the use of the radura symbol on all irradiated who foods.

Regarding the issue of labeling, in its initial petition, the FDA concluded that irradiation was a "material fact" about the processing of a food, and thus should be disclosed. The material fact remains; therefore, labeling should remain. Consumer acceptability, storage qualities and nutrients are affected. Some irradiated foods have different texture and spoilage characteristics than untreated foods. Most fruits and vegetables have nutrient losses that are not obvious or expected by the consumer.

Whether or not the FDA has approved irradiation as safe, it remains a new technology with no long-term human feeding studies. Consumers certainly have a right to know if this process has been used on their food. I want as much information as possible about the foods I eat and feed to my family.

I believe the label should be large enough to be readily visible to the consumer, on the front of the package. The label contains important information regarding the processing of the contents. For displayed whole foods such as produce, a prominent information display similar to that used for meats should be used (but containing the term "irradiation" and the radura.)

Because of the newness of the technology and the need to assess the public health effects of widespread use of irradiated foods, I believe that the FDA's labeling requirement should not be permitted to expire.

Sincerely,



Evelyn Clark
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